

# ARCHITECT'S DESIGN STATEMENT

NEWCASTLE ART GALLERY EXPANSION

REV – 26-APR-2021

**SMITH & TZANNES**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

**clare**design

TITLE	<b>Architect's</b> Design Statement
PROJECT	<b>Newcastle</b> Art Gallery Expansion [12_002]
CLIENT	City of Newcastle
PRINCIPAL AUTHOR	<b>Peter Smith</b> [Reg. No 7024] <a href="mailto:psmith@stz.com.au">psmith@stz.com.au</a>
REVISION & DATE	<b>REV – 26-APR-2021</b>
STATUS	<b>FINAL DRAFT</b>

## DISCLAIMER

While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that this document is correct at the time of publication, Smith and Tzannes Pty Ltd, and its employees, disclaim any and all liability to any person in respect of anything or the consequences of anything done or omitted to be done in reliance up on the whole or any part of this document

© Smith & Tzannes Pty Ltd 2021

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1 ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT FOR THE PART 4.55 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION – MARCH 2021 – CLARE DESIGN:	4
<b>2 NEWCASTLE ART GALLERY (UPDATED 2021)</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 BACKGROUND	6
2.2 OBJECTIVES	7
2.3 HISTORY	7
2.4 THE COLLECTION	7
2.5 EXHIBITIONS EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS	8
2.6 THE ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE	8
2.7 OF THE PROPOSED EXPANSION	9
<b>3 DESIGN OBJECTIVES (UPDATED 2021)</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE AMENDED PROPOSAL 2021	10
3.2 MATERIALS	13

## INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Smith & Tzannes in Association with Clare Design on behalf of the applicant and land-owner, The City of Newcastle, to support a section 4.55 modification to the approved Development Application for the expansion of the Newcastle Art Gallery.

In large part it modifies the statement prepared by the NSW Government Architect's office in 2011 for the approved Development Application.

Amendments include:

A statement by Clare Design prepared in March 2021 regarding the proposed amendments to the design

Updates to the sections relating to the Background and History of the Newcastle Art Gallery, originally prepared by the NSW Government Architect's Office.

---

# 1 ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT

## 1.1 ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT FOR THE PART 4.55 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION – MARCH 2021 – CLARE DESIGN:

Newcastle Art Gallery is being expanded in response to the desire for more exhibition space and a more diverse range of exhibitions. The expansion includes increased exhibition space, an education workshop, Gallery shop and cafe. The new planning arrangement provides increased flexibility for Gallery use now and in the future.

Some materials have changed to address the new codes. The materials, scale and proportions respect the architecture of the original 1977 Gallery, an innovative building from that time. The new building reflects the need for larger spaces and increased flexibility to cater for varied Gallery and cultural uses and the unpredictable nature of contemporary art.

The design prepared in 2011 by the NSW Governments Architects Office + Clare Design has been updated to reflect current codes and functional brief, and to ensure that the Gallery and Council's needs are met.

The two-storey courtyard of the original design remains the central point of orientation for all the Gallery spaces but has been developed into a light filled atrium for functions as well as exhibitions. The space has natural light from clerestory windows and is now designed for climate and sunlight control thereby increasing the functionality of the Gallery. The central atrium increases the legibility of the public circulation and can be viewed from Darby Street through the large panes of clear glass activating the street and visually connecting to exhibitions and Gallery functions.

The original function space located adjacent to the courtyard has been combined with the theatre space to its south to create a larger, highly flexible multi-use space which will allow the Gallery to broaden its offer.

The 2011 proposal incorporated two small retail spaces facing Darby Street however these glazed areas are now activated with an expanded public education and workshop space offering a variety of workshops and programs for children and adults. Towards Queen Street the Darby Street frontage has a slightly elevated ground floor which now steps back to create a landscaped courtyard and windows to a new compact administration area with staff entry from Queen Street. The administration area in the original building is now proposed as additional exhibition space.

The public entry on Laman Street acknowledges the Library and addresses Newcastle's important cultural precinct which includes Civic Park, City Hall, Civic

Theatre and reinforces the Gallery's place in the city. The corner of the site addressing both Laman and Darby Streets is activated by the cafe which has a direct connection to Laman Street as well as an internal connection to the Gallery entry. The cafe can operate outside of Gallery hours without compromising Gallery security. The Gallery shop has been relocated to the main entry on Laman Street. An awning over the footpath clearly announces the entry and provides shelter to the cafe area.

A basement level for storage and art quarantine as well as new staff amenities and storage has been created beneath the new administration area.

## 2 NEWCASTLE ART GALLERY (UPDATED 2021)

Below follows an updated version of the Architect's Statement prepared by The NSW Government Architect for the Newcastle Art Gallery Development Application approved in 2012.

**Note: Amendments made to the original text as part of the current proposal are shown in ~~strike through~~ / bold text. These are generally amendments made due to changes in factual information regarding the gallery, resulting from the lapse of time between the original application and the present.**

### 2.1 BACKGROUND

Newcastle Art Gallery is unique in Australia. Not only does it boast one of the most comprehensive collections of Australian art of any regional Gallery in the country, but it is frequently selected as the only regional Gallery in the state to host national and travelling exhibitions.

The Gallery's collection is valued at over **\$115 million** and is the City of Newcastle's single most valuable asset which appreciates in value both culturally and financially, as evidenced by in the **significant number of requests received for loans for exhibitions, and with the most recent valuation representing a 30% increase in asset value since 2015.**

The current exhibition storage and administration facilities were constructed in 1977 when the permanent collection was only a fraction of its current size and the Gallery's staff and visitor base was far smaller. Due to the age and limiting size of the current Gallery building, the capacity to display the city's permanent collection of over **7000** works of art is limited to **1%** of the collection.

The Gallery was designed in an era when activities which might contribute to the Gallery's income and community participation such as cafe, retail, functions and public programs were not considered.

Today the City of Newcastle has **155,000** residents and is the regional capital for a rapidly growing population numbering 550,000. The community has a higher than average number of young people reflecting the important tertiary education sector and a much higher than average percentage of older residents. A significant trend is the growth in the number of people returning to live in inner-city apartments taking advantage of the Honeysuckle Development Corporation's commercial and residential developments. There is also a growing appreciation of the advantages of the city beaches, harbour side, cultural and leisure facilities all within safe and easy walking distance of the commercial heart of the city.

These population trends offer considerable opportunities for the Gallery to continue to grow its audiences and community support amongst significant groups such as students, retirees, professionals and apartment dwellers. Clearly the ability of the Gallery to meet the City's needs and expectations and to continue to grow the community participation in its dynamic programs and activities cannot be met in the current building.

## 2.2 OBJECTIVES

- To engage people with art and contemporary ideas
- To support and promote the work of Australian and in particular regional artists
- To be a meeting place for artists
- To be welcoming and inclusive to all sectors of the community
- To educate a new generation about art

## 2.3 HISTORY

In 1945 Dr Roland Pope and an ophthalmic surgeon from Sydney made the promise of the bequest of an art collection of some 137 Australian paintings to Newcastle conditional upon the construction of a Gallery to house them. A bold promise fuelled by a passionate belief that a steel city could have the best Gallery in the country. Pope's collection was held in storage for 12 years awaiting a Gallery. In 1957 Newcastle City Art Gallery as it was then known opened on the second floor of the War Memorial Cultural Centre adjacent to the Gallery's current home.

Newcastle Art Gallery, Australia's first purpose-built regional Gallery was officially opened by her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the current Gallery building on Friday, 11 March 1977.

In 2004 Newcastle City Council and the community endorsed a master plan for the Gallery's expansion. Today the Gallery has in its collection over 7000 works of art and can display only a small percentage of its renowned collection. The plans for the Gallery's expansion will ensure that the Gallery continues in the spirit of innovation that saw it begin in 1977.

## 2.4 THE COLLECTION

From its modest beginnings one of the Gallery's strengths has been the acquisition of the work of emerging artists as well as major artists from the 19th and 20th centuries. One focus is on artists who have lived and worked in the Hunter region. Complementing this is an energetic exhibitions program that shows and documents significant art from across Australia and overseas.

Every major and iconic Australian artist is included in the collection. Works by Nolan, Boyd, Drysdale, Coburn, Olsen, Olley, Williams, Cossington Smith, Perceval, Proctor



and Preston are part of the rich legacy belonging to Newcastle and Hunter communities.

The Gallery proudly houses many works by significant artists, **for example the Gallery owns 16 works by Rupert Bunny, 38 by William Dobell, 25 by Lloyd Rees and 21 by John Olsen.**

Ceramics make up one of the foremost components of the collection with **450** Japanese ceramics acquired by purchase, gift and donation from within Australia and Japan, while the Australian ceramics reflect the changes in form and function of the past 60 years. Substantial donations of Japanese ceramics have been the result of the close trade ties that the Hunter has with Japanese industry.

Noteworthy collections of early Aboriginal bark paintings and recent purchases of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contemporary art add to the Gallery's reputation as one of the leading regional galleries in Australia.

**Key benefactors to the collection have included Dr Roland Pope, Anne von Bertouch, Dr William Bowmore, James Erskine, Jack Noel Kilgour, Ann Lewis AO, the former chairman of Nippon Steel - Shigeo Nagano, Margaret Olley, Les Renfrew, Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation, Newcastle Art Gallery Society, Newcastle Art Gallery Guides as well as countless artists and private or anonymous donors. The collection is continually growing with new acquisitions every year.**

## 2.5 EXHIBITIONS EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Newcastle Art Gallery services Newcastle and the Hunter and beyond through the presentation of approximately **10 major exhibitions and almost 500 public programs per year**. Newcastle Art Gallery plays a key educational role in the cultural life of Newcastle and the Hunter region. Dynamic education programs include art workshops, guided tours, film screenings, lectures, seminars and public events.

## 2.6 THE ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

The current Gallery

- has inadequate space to exhibit more than a small portion of the collection.
- has inadequate space to exhibit major travelling exhibitions.
- has no cafe, dedicated Gallery shop or other visitor amenities that are an essential component of a contemporary Gallery and critical to the long-term financial viability of the institution.
- has inadequate community educational facilities.
- does not meet current accessibility standards.
- has no secure and conditioned dock, crating or curatorial facilities that are a pre-requisite to sponsoring major travelling exhibitions.
- has inadequate administration and staff amenities facilities.

## 2.7 OF THE PROPOSED EXPANSION

The Gallery expansion will provide an opportunity to contribute to the revitalisation of the City's cultural identity both locally and nationally. The Gallery has the potential to become an even more significant tourism asset for Newcastle. The extension and diversification of the Newcastle tourism brand to include cultural tourism will have a growing importance in the future. The Art Gallery can play a key role in the generation of cultural tourism and return sustained economic benefits to the city.

A great opportunity for the Gallery is to take advantage of its close proximity to the thriving Darby Street dining and shopping strip. The Gallery could easily provide link between this area and the emerging civic and cultural precinct. The vision is to create a concentration of cultural experiences and a focal point for activity which will intern build patronage at venues and boost tourism for the whole city.

Within a short walking distance of the Gallery there are **14** commercial or community galleries and studio spaces. While these represent a diverse range of styles and standards, this group presents a substantial clustering of activity focusing on the visual arts. This grouping offers the potential for the development of an arts tourism product centred on Newcastle Art Gallery one of the many opportunities for the Gallery to increase its contribution to the burgeoning city and region tourism market.

Newcastle Art Gallery is the custodian of one of Australia's most substantial public art collections outside the major capital cities. The collection is deserving of an equally impressive Gallery that is vibrant, inspiring and functional. The current Gallery was opened in 1977 by her Majesty the Queen and had many features that were exemplary for an art Gallery of its period. However, the original building is now 44 years old and no longer meets the needs of the collection all the expectations of the community.

### 3 DESIGN OBJECTIVES (UPDATED 2021)

The Newcastle Art Gallery Expansion project aims to provide a facility that is functional, compliant and financially viable while responding to its location and reflecting its use as a world class Art Gallery.

Specific design objectives include:

- Make contemporary art accessible and engaging for a wide range of audiences.
- Improve identification of and access to the building's public and non-public entrances.
- Provide equitable and compliant access to and within the building.
- Provide international standard Gallery spaces.
- Provide leading edge education facilities.
- Provide commercial venues to supplement existing income sources.
- Incorporate ecologically sustainable design initiatives.
- Provide a building of high architectural quality appropriate to its significant setting.
- Respond to the site's urban context and heritage significance.

#### 3.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE AMENDED PROPOSAL 2021

##### Overview

A two-level addition is proposed to the Darby Street frontage to provide a major new exhibition space and public amenities. A new two-level addition, **with a basement** is proposed to the Queen Street frontage to provide new back of house facilities. The following text outlines accommodation to be provided and the rationale behind its placement in the design:

##### Public entry

A new entry is provided at the corner of Laman and Darby Street in a location that allows for an accessible entry from the street level to both the expanded exhibition areas and independent after-hours access to the cafe, ~~theatre~~ and community educational facilities. The relocation of the entry allows for the planning of an extended exhibition circuit. The closure of the current entry allows for the provision of a new sculpture courtyard in Laman Street.

##### Circulation

Visitors will enter the foyer via the new entry and proceed to either the exhibition via the reception desk and cloakroom or directly to the cafe ~~theatre~~ and community educational facilities.

Loading to back-of-house and venues will be from the new Loading Dock on Queen Street.

### Galleries

The existing Gallery spaces on the ground and first floors are retained in this proposal and current areas given over to temporary storage are to be reopened. New Gallery spaces are created on both the ground level and the first floor principally along Darby Street to provide a critical mass of exhibition on the entry level, as well as create a substantial Gallery space for the permanent collection.

### Loading Dock

It is essential for the Gallery's operation that trucks be able to load and off-load artworks and venue props undercover and in secure conditions and to achieve the required minimum head height of 4.5m. At only one location around the site is it practicable to drive such trucks onto the site. The loading dock and associated plant areas have been moved away from the proposed new entry to provide for direct access from Queen Street. A new large art lift is to be provided to allow for movement of large scale works to all levels of the building.

The loading dock is clearly separated from pedestrian entrance. it will be used for deliveries associated with exhibitions, venues, cafe, store merchandise and couriers.

### Back-of-house

Extended back-of-house facilities have been relocated adjacent to the new dock area.

### Education

A dedicated education studio space has been located on the ground level to provide secure premises for school and other groups.

### Offices

The Gallery offices on the first floor **were previously proposed to be retained** with some minor refurbishment. **The revised proposal provides new staff offices on Queen Street and an additional staff entry, with staff amenities located at the basement level.**

### Retail

A new Gallery shop is to be provided on the ground floor of the Darby Street wing adjacent to the main entry. **Previously proposed retail shops on Darby street are no longer considered commercially viable. This space has been reallocated to Gallery area.**

### BUILT FORM

The existing Gallery is in a prominent position overlooking Civic Park and is an important component of the cultural precinct. It is part of the line of civic buildings forming the southern edge of Laman Street. The current entry address is Laman Street.

The building is also an important example of early 1970s architecture with its brutalist aesthetic. The building has been applauded as a model for medium-sized galleries with its innovative floor plan, hanging system and borrowed soffit lighting. The main structural system external to the ground floor consists of an exposed grid

of double-bladed concrete columns and a lattice beam floor system. The overhanging upper floor allows for soffit lighting of the underside via high level strip glazing in the perimeter walling, in a lighting scheme similar to the Guggenheim Museum. The roof is similarly formed to replicate the effect of the upper floor galleries. The result is a strong horizontal form floating over the Laman Street carriageway and Civic Park.

The predominant view is that of the main Gallery form viewed from the park through Laman Street tree canopy. The current Derby Street and Queen Street facade are considered secondary and set well back from the street. In keeping with the brutalist aesthetic the materials consist principally of natural concrete and painted fibre cement screens, galvanised steel and glass.

The new additions will be configured in contemporary forms that are consistent with this approach. The main entry is retained on Laman Street at the junction between the existing Gallery and the new Darby Street wing. Entry is via a gentle sloping path to a lower ground level that contains the reception foyer, cafe and shop. The education space is located adjacent the foyer. Internally, a lift and wide steps allow for movement into the Gallery and education and theatre areas.

Externally, the new extension has a horizontal articulation which picks up on the language of the existing Gallery with the first floor cladding proud of the ground floor. Additionally the terrace at the north end of Darby Street wing cantilevers over the cafe below.

The ground floor is principally glazed with the intention of activating the Derby Street facade by displaying the public community functions. ~~Two fully glazed retail areas also activate the Darby Street / Queen Street corner linking the new development to the retail strip of Darby Street to the south.~~

The back-of-house extension to Queen Street has been restrained to a simple form as a secondary element with dark metal zinc cladding.

External materials are consistent with the original with cement composite cladding panels, glass and metal finishes. Timber Detailing to window mullions and sliding screens in a copper metallic colour provides a natural warmth to the material palette.

#### Overshadowing

The proposed additions will not create significant overshadowing of adjoining properties. Some additional afternoon shadow of the Darby Street roadway will occur post noon. **The proposed part 4.55 amendments to the approved DA do not cause any significant change to shadows.**

Refer to the shadow diagrams prepared as part of the Project Application.

#### Privacy

Given the existing public nature of the building and site, the privacy of adjoining properties is not significantly affected by the proposed development.

### 3.2 MATERIALS

External materials have been selected to satisfy a number of criteria:

- To reflect the project stature as a high-profile public building
- To complement the existing building and neighbouring buildings without resorting to mimicry
- To reflect the NAG's standing as a forward-looking institution
- To satisfy energy efficiency requirements
- To last at least 30 years without major maintenance, bearing in mind the potentially corrosive marine environment

The palette of materials includes:

- glazed windows and balustrades
- light, natural-coloured cement composite sheeting to the upper floor
- dark ~~zinc~~ **metal (aluminium)** cladding to the parapet and Queen Street back-of-house areas
- ~~metal-timber~~ **metal-timber** detailing to **upper-level façade**, window mullions, louvres and sliding screens
- off-form concrete to the external landscaping walls
- ~~terrazzo~~ pavers to terraces
- metal roof sheeting
- plasterboard, timber and ~~terrazzo~~ **polished concrete** to the interior